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Title: Need to set up a separate Ministry to look after the welfare of fishermen in the country.

SHRI A.K.S. VIJAYAN (NAGAPATTINAM): I would like to request the Hon'ble Prime Minister to consider setting up of a separate Ministry for the welfare of fishermen in the country.

In this regard, I would like to draw his kind attention to the innumerable sufferings of the Indian fishermen in various States. Our country's maritime border is very long. Fishermen of our country venture into sea for their livelihood. However, they are left at the mercy of the authorities of the neighbouring countries such as Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh, etc. It is very often reported in the press that our fishermen are abducted by the Navy/Coast Guard of the neighbouring countries. These innocent fishermen who venture into sea for fishing purpose are put into jails and are tortured by the authorities of the neighbouring countries. They are released only after efforts by the Government of India. The fishermen of my State Tamil Nadu are very often victims at the hands of Srilankan Navy. Moreover, our fishermen should also be given welfare benefits by the Union Government as most of the families of the fishermen are dependent solely on fishing, which is not very remunerative. It is very important that the families of fishermen should be provided facilities like health, education, housing etc. They should be imparted requisite training and other equipment essential for fishing. It is, therefore, very essential that a separate Ministry should be established at the Central Level to take care of the interests of fishermen including their security, while they are fishing in deep seas.

I, therefore, urge upon the Union Government to consider setting up of an exclusive Ministry for taking care/dealing with the issues relating to fishermen so that their problems are addressed in a time bound manner.